846 On the second day after the delivery the mother may go outside to relieve herself, but otherwise she stays in the house for eight or ten days. Then she rubs herself and the child daily with red wood, for a month if she is in the village of her parents or for two months if she is in her husband's house. Only after this period has elapsed does she again take up her customary work.

834 846 The woman has to observe a special diet before and after the confinement only with respect to the food taboos discussed previously. On the other hand, she must abstain from sexual intercourse until the child can walk (two years), for if she does not, the worst, even death, is to be feared for the little one. Of course, especially towards the end of this period, a great many infringements of this taboo occur; in such a case one speaks of a tsǎbe bǒ́ngo (literally: to cast the children away, to thrust them away from oneself).

853 862 The child is nursed for a like period since the milk is supposed to diminish and dry up only after resumption of regular sexual intercourse. However, the flow of milk resumes in case of renewed pregnancy, so in that case the child can again be nursed. Even later, often until the seventh year, the sturdy urchin now and then still enjoys the sweet draught. If the mother is tired of giving the breast, she simply rubs her nipples with pepper (Capsicum).

/277/ Section 19

Childhood and Games

000 1. Names and name-giving. Time at which the name is given, announcement of the name. -- Names given by the mother. -- Variation of names among the subtribes. -- Classification of names. -- Names with explanation: A. Boys' names and their classification; B. Girls' names. -- Nicknames, jocular verse with nicknames. -- Full name (father's name, kin group, name of the mother's kin group), example. -- Series of

844 see it, and if she sees it she will have no more children. The mother is then washed with very hot water in which pimento has been steeped; after this her abdomen is bound with a belt of bark (ewag) which she keeps on for several days.

846 After the birth of her child, a young mother is known by the name of nzinze, which she keeps until she has the right to resume relations with her husband. She has a special bed in the hut, on which a [841] menstruating woman may neither sit nor lie so as not to give scabies to the mother and the newborn. The young mother rests for about three months, during which she does no work and bathes every day with water as hot as she can stand, the lumbar region especially being [751] bathed. Moreover, after every bath she is smeared with red paste (ba) to prevent scabies.

Recovery from childbirth is marked by a celebration (okula mon). The first time she goes out, the woman carries a package of ba, a piece of which she places on every tree stump she meets on her way, to mark her path. On her return she prepares a large quantity of food she has brought back. The husband invites the men of his tribe, and the wife invites the women of her husband's tribe. When the food is ready, it is taken to the men in the watchers' hut, where the child is also taken. The women eat in the hut.

846 827 751 To improve the quality of her milk, the young mother drinks progressively, if necessary, three medicines:

(1) An infusion of aseh roots.

(2) A milky-looking infusion of pieces of tubers of a plant with a thorny stem (ekon bökun).

(3) Latex from a rubber plant.

761 789 It may be that the child dies at birth. Three causes for this are recognized:

An evur has eaten the child. To prevent this from being repeated and so that the woman will in the future bring living children into the world, she resorts to the practitioner. He goes into the forest armed [83] with a machete and a basket. He gathers the bark of an ovan, and also brush and vines that grow under this tree. On his return to the village he divides his collection into two parts. One part, mixed with water, is put in a large rectangular container of banana leaves called etok, which has been filled with the blood of a domestic animal sacrificed for the welfare of the woman. She then immerses herself

844 one of the women's associations. The child is delivered on a mattress of banana leaves. The umbilical cord is cut with a special knife, perhaps the same used in circumcisions (1), and it is buried under a

1. This is not certain; since the circumciser is a man, we may question whether he would use a woman's knife.

banana tree, whose fruit will be étyi to people of the opposite sex from the child. The placenta is buried by the mother herself in a secret spot, or in her place by a woman of her own blood; afterward the mother may tell her child, as a mild way of cursing, "I know where your placenta is." The baby is immediately wrapped in a loincloth and laid beside its mother, after being shown to the father if it is a boy. The following day the baby as well as the mother is rubbed with warm oil, and it is given the breast. /92/

845 Difficult deliveries are quite common, and the midwives' technique extremely uneven. Although some may know how to effect artificial delivery, even version, most of them are limited to massaging and to using magic, like placing an axe between the mother's legs. If the woman dies in childbirth, sorcery is suspected or a grave nsem like incest; in the old days the baby, even if born alive, would have been buried with its mother. A stillborn child also arouses great suspicion about the mother, who may have to go through an ordeal and be forced to confess an offense presumed to have caused the death of the fetus.

847 Some writers have claimed that baby girls were sacrificed at birth as being of no value to the clan. This seems very unlikely unless the infanticide was the result of an accusation of sorcery, which could also apply to a boy. What is true is that a woman giving birth only to girls would be considered the victim of a spell or a breaking of taboo.

The birth of twins is propitious, for they are thought to be necessarily mie or mmimie, that is, free of évu (the same word mie means "confinement" or, more precisely, the "labor" of childbirth). Twins receive traditional names that vary according to clan.

846 The first coming out of the house /relevailles, "churching"/, ékulu mon, "baby's coming out," takes place three months after birth, if everything has gone well. The woman starts bathing in the

river again (until now she has washed in her hut), puts on new clothes presented by her husband, and starts cooking for him again and working in her garden. Special purification has been carried out if the baby has died in the interval. The prohibition against sexual relations lasts as long as the child is at the breast; to break this taboo would make it nyu meyôm, drink sperm, which might lead to its death.

Postpartum care is given by the mbialé binga, then by the woman's mother or aunt or ntyi. This consists of vaginal douches and external and internal napkins of vegetable compresses.

The baby may be suckled only by its mother or a woman of the mother's blood, a grandmother or maternal aunt. If this is impossible, the baby cannot live (at least in rural districts where concentrated milk is unknown). Traditional pharmacopoeia possesses, however, extraordinary vegetable lactic stimulants, probably without equivalent in the European pharmacopoeia.

b. Childhood

The old custom was not to name (yôlé) the baby until it was taken out of the house; until then it was usually called by the name of a small animal, like "squirrel" or "palm rat." Nowadays the name is given within a few days of birth, if for no other reason than to comply with citizenship regulations. /93/

A name, jôé or jui (also meaning nose, order, command, authority) includes the éyôlé, the individual's own name, and the atinan, complementary name chosen from the biyôlé of ancestors according to clan or family traditions, which are on the decline. Formerly, a cognomen was added to these, a mebatan (1) or jôé mebatan (lit. salutation name), sometimes conferred at initiation. This mebatan

1. Trilles translates this word as "genealogy": lañ mebatan means both "to recite the genealogy" and "to recite the salutation," simply because this was in fact the formal way of introducing oneself; a newcomer's genealogy determined how his hosts would "greet" him. True genealogy, pedigree, is éndan, related to ndan, tattoo mark, emblem.